

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Sub E1
D. 2

1. (Currently Amended) A low depth bottle crate having a peripheral wall of uniform height, said peripheral wall including a pair of side walls and a pair of end walls; a crate bottom connected to said peripheral wall, an upper surface of said crate bottom formed to include a bottle supporting platform for each bottle to be received in the crate, said peripheral wall and said crate bottom defining a crate interior that is devoid of any interior partitions; a plurality of substantially U-shaped cut-outs in upper portions of said side and end walls defining columns between said cut-outs, lower portions of said peripheral wall adjacent said crate bottom and extending upwardly from said crate bottom formed as solid, continuous bands along said side walls; said lower portions of said peripheral wall ~~and said columns~~ being of only single wall construction; ~~except for hollow caps at upper ends of said columns that are of double wall construction; each column having a hollow cap at an upper end thereof and~~ each of said columns, except for four corner columns, having a tapered support buttress extending downwardly and inwardly from a lower edge of a respective one of said hollow caps to said crate bottom[[,]]; and wherein said cut-outs terminate at a ledge that separates said upper portions of said side and end walls from said lower portions of said side and end walls, and further wherein said lower portions of said side and end walls are connected to said crate bottom by a ~~plurality of~~ plural groups of inwardly directed ribs ~~arranged in groups,~~

~~respectively, one of said plural groups of ribs arranged directly below each cut-out, and~~

~~extending vertically along said peripheral wall from said each cut-out to said crate~~

~~bottom.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The crate of claim 1 wherein each of said plural groups comprises three substantially L-shaped ribs.

3. (Currently Amended) The crate of claim 1 wherein said buttresses engage said crate bottom inwardly of said plural groups of inwardly directed ribs.

4. (Original) The crate of claim 1 including at least one nesting rib between each of said buttresses and an interior surface of each of said columns.

5. (Original) The crate of claim 4 including a nesting rib on an interior surface of each said corner column.

6. (Original) The crate of claim 1 wherein said bottle supporting platforms are flush with said crate bottom.

7. (Original) The crate of claim 1 wherein handle cut-outs are provided in lower portions of said end walls, and handle bars extend between adjacent columns in said end walls directly above said handle cut-outs.

Sub E-1 8. (Original) The crate of claim 7 wherein said handle bars are of double wall thickness.

9. (Original) The crate of claim 8 wherein each handle bar is connected directly to said crate bottom.

10. (Original) The crate of claim 1 wherein each of said hollow caps is formed with a pair of bottle supporting ribs facing respective adjacent bottle receiving platforms.

D2 11. (Original) The crate of claim 1 wherein said crate bottom has a lower surface formed with an array of recesses adapted to engage bottle caps of bottles carried in an underlying similar crate.

12. (Currently Amended) A low depth bottle crate having a peripheral wall of uniform height, said peripheral wall including a pair of side walls and a pair of end walls; a crate bottom connected to said peripheral wall, an upper surface of said crate bottom being flat and devoid of any interior columns but including a bottle supporting platform for each bottle to be received in the crate; a plurality of substantially U-shaped cut-outs in upper portions of said side and end walls defining columns between said cut-outs, said cut-outs located, respectively, adjacent each bottle supporting platform and terminating at a ledge that separates said upper portions of said side and end walls from lower portions of said side and end walls; lower portions of said peripheral wall adjacent from said ledge to said crate bottom formed with of solid, single wall thickness only, with continuous

Sub E1
bands extending along said side walls; and wherein handle cut-outs are provided in lower portions of said end walls, defining handle bars that extend between adjacent columns in said end walls directly above said handle cut-outs, each handle bar connected directly to the crate bottom at a mid-point of said handle bar by a strut extending from said handle bar to a raised pedestal on said crate bottom.

13. (Cancelled).

D2
14. (Cancelled).

15. (Original) The crate of claim 12 wherein said handle bars are of double wall thickness.

16. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 12 wherein said crate bottom has a lower surface formed with an array of recesses adapted to engage bottle caps of bottles carried in an underlying similar crate.

17. (Currently Amended) A low depth bottle crate having a peripheral wall of uniform height, said peripheral wall including a pair of side walls and a pair of end walls; a crate bottom connected to said peripheral wall, an upper surface of said crate bottom formed to include a bottle supporting platform for each bottle to be received in the crate; a plurality of substantially U-shaped cut-outs in upper portions of said side and end walls defining columns between said cut-outs, lower portions of said peripheral wall adjacent

Sub E1 said crate bottom formed as solid, continuous bands along said side walls, said lower portions of said peripheral wall and said columns being of only single wall construction; ^{run.} except for hollow caps at upper ends of said columns that are of double wall construction; each of said columns except for four corner columns having a hollow cap at an upper end thereof and an angled buttress extending from a lower edge of said cap to said crate bottom; and wherein handle cut-outs are provided in lower portions of said end walls, and handle bars extend between adjacent columns in said end walls directly above said handle cut-outs, a mid-portion of each handle bar connected directly to the crate bottom; said crate bottom having a lower surface formed with an array of recesses adapted to engage bottle caps of bottles carried in an underlying similar crate, said recesses in each of four quadrants being individually different but substantial mirror images of recesses in adjacent quadrants in respective longitudinal and transverse directions.

D2 18. (Previously Presented) The low depth crate of claim 17 wherein said lower portions of said peripheral wall are connected to said crate bottom by a plurality of substantially L-shaped ribs located directly beneath respective ones of said cut-outs.

Sub E1 19. (Original) The low depth crate of claim 18 wherein said recesses have peripheries defined by vertically oriented ribs, and wherein said substantially L-shaped ribs have horizontal components with heights less than corresponding heights of said vertically oriented ribs.

20. (Original) The crate of claim 17 wherein said handle bars are of double wall thickness.

21. (Cancelled).

22. (Original) The crate of claim 17 wherein each of said hollow caps is formed with a pair of bottle supporting ribs facing respective adjacent bottle receiving platforms.

23. (Original) The crate of claim 12 wherein said side walls are formed with a plurality of laterally spaced wedge slides that provide a smooth transitions from said upper portions to said lower portion of said side walls.

24. (Currently Amended). A low depth bottle crate comprising a peripheral wall including a pair of side walls and a pair of end walls; a crate bottom connected to a lower portion of said peripheral wall, an upper surface of said crate bottom formed to include a bottle supporting platform for each bottle to be received in the crate; a plurality of substantially U-shaped cut-outs in an upper portion of said side and end walls defining columns between said cut-outs, said cut-outs located, respectively, adjacent each bottle supporting platform and terminating at a ledge that separates said upper portion of said side and end walls from said lower portion of said side and end walls, said lower portion of said peripheral wall being continuous along said side walls; and a plurality of laterally spaced wedge elements on outside surfaces of selected ones of said columns but fewer

HAMMETT

Appl. No. 09/978,576

August 20, 2003

Dr than all of said columns, extending upwardly from said ledge and thus providing that

~~provide~~ a smooth transition from said upper portion to said lower portion of said side

walls.
